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NEW OPERATION IN THE TREATMENT OF CARIES OF THE TEETH.

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ONE of the most common operations in dentistry at the present day, is that which is performed for arresting the progress of caries by filling or plugging with gold the cavity which has been formed in the osseous part of a tooth by the progress of disease.

Much the largest number of cases which require this operation, are, when treated in due season, before the disease has extended to the nervous pulp of the tooth, such as can be treated effectually and with but very little if any pain to the patient. Teeth faithfully filled in this stage of the disease are found to be less liable to a repeated attack at the part operated upon, than at any other sound portion of the tooth.

But in order to prepare a diseased tooth for receiving the gold, or other metal employed for the purpose, it is requisite to understand and keep in mind the pathological state of the bone, and proceed on the well-established principle in surgery, in relation to the treatment of carious or necrosed bone, which requires that in order to place the healthy parts in the most favorable situation to heal, the diseased and perished parts which have not been, or cannot be, cast off from the adjacent healthy bone, should be carefully removed by instruments.

In doing this it has been found that a certain proportion of cases cannot be thus treated without approaching too near to the cavity of the nerve, or exposing it entirely, so that to fill the tooth in this state would but cause immediate or subsequent pain and inflammation, followed by ulceration, and if not relieved by the natural opening of an alveolar abscess (gum boil), the loss of the tooth would be inevitable.

It always has been a desideratum in dentistry to discover or invent some method or treatment which would effectually destroy the central nerves of such teeth, and render them susceptible of being filled and restored to usefulness. Drills and other small instruments were used to tear to pieces or extract the nerve, but except in those which have a single root and straight canal, this could not be done. All the common escharotics and caustics used in surgery for the destruction of soft parts have been tried, even the actual cautery (a red hot wire) was not passed unnoticed in these efforts; but all with only partial success. Various compound salts and essential oils, were repeatedly tried, with no better results. So that such cases became discouraging both to the patient and practitioner, and they were commonly given up.

About the year 1830 the white oxide of arsenic was introduced, and I believe first tried still earlier by Dr. Spooner, a scientific American dentist, in Montreal, Canada. This article was received into use with great caution on account of its potent and poisonous qualities; but it was soon found that so minute a quantity would act effectually that there was not the least risk to any one, of being injured by it, if it were cautiously administered. And for a time every dentist who used it was led to hope, and some to feel confident, that the long-desired article for saving teeth which were diseased to the extent just mentioned, had at last been found, and indeed a very large proportion of such teeth as had to be extracted or left to be rapidly decaying and painful previous to the discovered effects of the arsenic, have been rendered comfortable, durable and useful.

But yet there has been something wanting to complete success in a certain proportion of such cases. Where the central ganglion or nervous pulp has been fully destroyed and the tooth filled in a perfect manner, there will succeed in a few hours, days, weeks, or even months after, soreness, pain, inflammation and swelling about the sockets, and, if the tooth be not extracted in season to prevent it, ulceration.

These evils have still occurred often enough to induce many dentists to spare their patients and themselves the vexation which they occasioned, and some have said to me, "I do not attempt to save such teeth, so often as I formerly did, the treatment fails in so many instances."

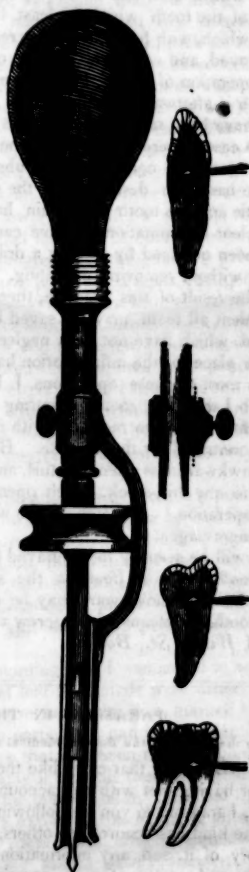
The questions naturally presented to the mind in regard to such cases are, What is the primary or principal cause of all these troubles? What the operation of the cause? If the nerve is simply destroyed by the arsenic, and the tooth not filled, there is much less frequently subsequent pain, though the tooth will be uneasy during mastication and rapidly decay. Filling the tooth, then, in this situation, is the primary cause; and the following is the operation of it, in producing the successive troubles which occur. The natural canals in the roots of the teeth, occupied by the nerves previous to the application of the arsenic, cannot, except in a very few instances, be entirely filled in the operation of plugging. A cavity is hence left, minute though it be, and this is filled by the extravasated blood, or by some watery secretion. In some constitutions this will give no trouble, but in others become offensive, increasing so as to cause pressure on the soft tissues surrounding the extremity of the fang. Irritation first, with sense of fulness, occurs, then pain, the consequence of slight inflammation of the alveo-dental or articulating membrane. This membrane becomes thickened, the tooth is started slightly from the socket, feels loose and sore, inflammation increases and covers the whole of the fangs, extends to the gum which becomes swollen and tender; pus being at length secreted, fills the whole canal in the fangs of the tooth, occupies the extremity of the socket, makes increased pressure on the inflamed parts, and if the tooth is suffered to remain long enough, either the plate of the alveolus and the gum over it become absorbed at some part and the pus escapes and gives relief, or the vitality of the whole articulating

membrane is destroyed by ulceration, the tooth remains as a foreign substance, and must be extracted before the part can heal.

The object I have sought, then, to prevent the commencement of these troubles, has been that of filling the tooth without closing or sealing the natural cavity or chamber of the nerve. For reasons which will be evident to every experienced dentist, this could not be done effectually by leaving the passage through the metallic filling. I therefore conceived the idea of drilling a fine hole in the neck of the tooth just beneath the gum and through into the natural cavity, at a point rather deeper than the filling should reach. [See sections of teeth in the engraving.] Through this artificial opening any fluid collected in the cavity of the fang would, as I judged, find exit; and the gum, acting as a flap or valve, would prevent all particles of food from entering the new orifice. All undue pressure from a confined fluid on the already irritated soft tissues about the extremity of the fangs would be prevented, and all the consequences resulting from it which have been mentioned above.

The result of my first operation in this way encouraged me to repeat it in similar cases, and I have now continued it for more than two years, saving, as I believe, more than two hundred teeth, which under any other circumstances I should have been obliged to extract. I do not know that I have failed of perfect success, but once; and on extracting the tooth, which became painful, I found that the drill had passed into a small caries peculiarly situated in the tooth, and which did not communicate with the natural cavity. I was therefore deceived in the operation.

Nearly a year ago I communicated the result of my experiments to



my brother—Dr. Flagg, of Philadelphia. He has since informed me that he had performed the operation in about twenty cases, all of which have been successful.

It will be seen that in this operation the perforation is made through a part of the tooth which is least liable to be destroyed by the disease, a part which, with few exceptions, remains sound while the whole crown is destroyed, and while the interior of the fang is wasting away. During the operation of filling, I place a metallic pin where the drill has passed, which is afterwards withdrawn.

I have been successful with this new mode of treatment, not only in those cases where I have made the perforation previous to filling, in order to prevent the occurrence of subsequent pain, but in those where the nerve has been destroyed by the ordinary progress of the disease or by caustic and the tooth filled, pain has followed months or years after, with sufficient inflammation to have caused the loss of the tooth, if relief had not been obtained by passing a drill into the root; and this has been sufficient without removing the filling.

The result of this practice, therefore, authorizes me to say, that I am confident all teeth may be saved by it, and be rendered comfortable and useful, which have not been neglected so long that ulceration has already taken place, or the inflammation has become so great that it is inevitable.

In most of these operations, I have used the simple instrument with which I drill the roots for setting artificial teeth, holding the lips of the patient aside when requisite, with my finger, or by the aid of a speculum oris contrived for the purpose. But there has been some inconvenience and awkwardness attending this, and I have lately constructed an appendage to my drill-stock, which operates perfectly as a guard to the lips in this operation. A sketch of the whole instrument is given in the annexed engraving.

It will be seen by the engraved figure of the instrument, that the drill is intended to turn freely in the semi-cylindrical portion of the guard; and that the whole guard may be moved, as the drill passes deeper into the tooth, by means of the screw at its upper extremity. J. F. FLAGG.

31 Winter St., Boston.

PARASITES IN THE CELLULAR TISSUE.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—Believing that cases like the following are of rare occurrence, from never having met with any account of them in medical journals, or treatises, I transmit to you the following details, with the hope that if anything of the kind has occurred to others, they will favor your readers with some history of it, and any information they may possess in relation to the origin and nature of such parasites as infest and *traverse* the cellular tissue.

On the 7th inst., I was called to see a boy of 4 years of age, troubled with something travelling about under the skin. His mother told me that

ten days ago he had first complained of a gnawing, burning pain on the anterior part of the right shoulder, and that on examination she detected a hard substance immediately under the skin, which she supposed to be a splinter, although there was no wound in the vicinity through which it could have been introduced. In a day or two after, the child again complaining of the pain, she examined the part, and found that the foreign substance had changed its position, having advanced about two inches along the clavicle, its source being indicated by a livid mark, such as is occasioned by a blow from a small rod. In three days the line extended nearly to the top of the sternum, and here two small apertures, about half an inch apart, were made. The woman having exposed the boy's chest, I could distinctly see the cicatrices of the two apertures. From this point, the worm, as the woman now believed it to be, turned downwards, passing parallel with and to the right of the sternum, to near its lower extremity, where it diverged to the right, passing under the breast, and upwards under the arm-pit, over the lower angle of the scapula, to the spine. Here the discolored line that had followed its course ceased, and the only indication of the creature's progress was the gnawing pain over the left scapula, and under the left arm-pit, when it again emerged to the skin, the blue line re-appearing on the left breast a little above the nipple. It now crossed the sternum, intersecting its former track, and advancing about two inches turned upwards and to the left, crossed again its first track by the sternum, and perforated the skin near the superior extremity of this bone. The mother now attempted to extract the troublesome traveller, but he eluded her, and although transpierced several times with a needle, and experiencing other rough usage by compression upon the bone and pinching between the fingers, continued on his way with his energies apparently unimpaired.

He now advanced along the left clavicle, and having reached a point on the left shoulder corresponding to that on the right where he had first been observed, he stopped and began to retrace his steps. He now again opened for himself an outlet, through which the friends of the patient again endeavored to eject him, but with no better success than before. Continuing his retrograde course, at the distance of about an inch from the first, he opened another aperture, and still advancing perforated the skin again at about the same interval.

The last hole had been made on the morning that I was called to see him. The scars of all the apertures that had been made were distinct, and six in number. The traces of his course under the skin, marked by the blue line, had faded out, except in the parts that had been recently traversed. On examining the last aperture that had been made, I could feel a hard body close to it, and on pressing it towards the orifice could distinguish a gelatinous substance near the bottom of it. I seized this with a pair of dressing forceps, and easily extracted the cause of all the trouble. It appeared to be the larva of some insect, closely resembling that met frequently with in apples and other fruits. It was translucent, and of a gelatinous consistency. It seemed to be composed of a series of rings—ten in number—tapering from the middle to both extremities,

which to the naked eye appeared alike and pointed. The circumference of the middle was about that of a crow quill, and its length two thirds of an inch.

The whole distance traversed by this animal, after it was first observed, I found by admeasurement to be *forty-three* inches.

P. S.—Jan. 8. I regret to inform you (from fear that the case is getting to be a common one) that another insect of the same description was extracted this morning from the scalp of the same patient. It had journeyed from a spot, a little behind the right mastoid process, to the crown of the head, where it made an aperture similar to those made by the other, through which the mother of the boy easily extracted it.

Gloucester, Jan. 8, 1847.

Respectfully yours, &c.

H. E. DAVIDSON.

MESMERISM AND CLAIRVOYANCE IN NEW YORK.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

A PATIENT of mine, a Mr. B., who is a very intelligent gentleman, and has paid enough attention to the profession of medicine to know its inefficiency in certain cases, and understands mankind enough to be aware of the facility with which the mass can be deceived; has had for many months, attacks, more or less continued, of pain in the left side of the head, which have frequently disabled him. At first I was afraid of some injury to the substance of the brain; but for some time past I have been free from fear on that point, and have been satisfied that it was more a rheumatic affection of the muscles and membranes, for there has been good general health, notwithstanding the continued attacks of the pain.

In treating this gentleman, I always explained, if he did not perceive, the reasons for whatever I did, and we went on satisfactorily in our course of treatment, because we understood each other and were agreed. However, as he did not get well, his friends became impatient and wished other advice to be taken. To please them, he wore Christie's galvanic rings, and took his galvanic bath, to no purpose, except to put five dollars into Christie's pocket; and next, he was pushed hard to pay a visit to a mesmeric doctor, whose clairvoyants never failed to make out what was the matter, and whose prescriptions never failed to cure.

One morning he and I agreed to go together to one of the most celebrated of this class, and have a mesmeric examination of his case. On arriving at the house, we were received by a very plain, unpretending old man, who has more of the farmer than the doctor in his face and manner, and appeared much more likely to be duped himself than to dupe any one. We had to sit for half an hour, while some one else was being examined; and during this time, we were observing and noting what went on. Most of the persons who came, or were about, were women—"the weaker vessels," as Paul has it, and some of them were "weak" enough.

The folding doors now opened, and we had a view of the doctor's

sanctum. He informed us that he must fetch another clairvoyant, for the one he had just been operating with, had been put to sleep three times this morning, and was considerably weakened. He went out and brought in a tall, common-looking young woman, whose manner was very pert and saucy, and who had in her hand a basket and key. She tossed her head, and appeared to be very consequential in a small way. The doctor requested her, very civilly and mildly, to fetch him something, and she snapped at him like a cat at a fly. The doors were shut and opened again, when the doctor requested us to walk in, and we saw the lady seated in her arm-chair, ready for operations.

The doctor stood at the distance of a couple of yards, and made many passes with his magic hands, when the lady soon went off, to all appearance, to sleep. I sat close by, observing the operation. My friend was requested to sit by the lady, that she might examine his case, as she was now ready for her performance. The doctor asked her to say what she saw in this gentleman, and sat down with pencil and paper to record the revelations of science. She said the liver was hard and large, particularly the left lobe. The bile was thick, dark and copper-colored-like, and did not flow freely. There were dark-blue and black spots on the lobes of the liver, and there was a poor and obstructed circulation of black blood, and the bile did not get formed properly-like. (She seemed to have a great liking for the word *like*.) How is the stomach? said the doctor. She said it was larger than it should be; had a great deal of dark yellow, copper-colored-like fluid; she supposed it must be bile in it; the food did not digest—and it hurts me when I take my breath. The doctor explained to us, that *she felt what my friend felt*.

"Will you look at the spleen, now?" said he. She said, "There's a kind of eruption about the coats of the spleen, something pock-like, and very nasty; and there's a thickish, yellowish-dirty fluid in it, that does not flow easily." "I feel uneasy and swelled under my ribs," she said. "How are the ligaments?" said he. She replied, they were affected with an eruption in the same manner. (Every now and then the doctor asked explanations of what she said, and her replies were very colloquial, just as much so, as if she were talking in an ordinary manner awake; but the revelations were in one particular tone.)

"How are the lungs?" said the doctor. She replied, "They are sound, but the bag in which they work is dry and husky-like, and there are some little spots in them, but they are not like tubercles; but they don't let the lungs move easy-like." "Oh my! how it hurts me to talk! I don't like to talk. I want to be alone. I don't like company!" (She is now expressing your feelings, said the doctor.) "How is the heart?" said he. "Oh, it does not move easy; the blood is thick, and the bag is dry and husky-like, and I don't feel easy about my heart. It swells-like, and seems of a sort of fulness." (That, Sir, said the doctor, is what you feel.)

"Have you looked at the spine?" "Oh, it looks thick and full and swelled-like. The nervous fluid is thick and yellow darkish-like, of a coppery color; and the spine is painful from the shoulders to the middle of my back, and I can't stand it long." ("She is now feeling what you feel," said the doctor.)

"Did you look at the head"? said he. "The brain is healthy, but the nervous fluid *ain't*, for it's dark and coppery colored-like, and the blood is thick and dark, and don't circulate well. That great vein at the base of the brain can hardly send the blood along at all, it's so thick, for such a pain just come in my temple."

"What condition are the bowels"? said he. "They're dry and weak, and the blood don't circulate in them well, and there's a darkish colored fluid in them, for they don't digest the food properly, and they're bound and costive. I want to wake—I don't want to be here any longer, nor to be asked any more questions." "Well, well," said the doctor, "wait a bit, and you shall wake." Then turning to my friend, he said, "Would you wish her to prescribe for you"? "No," said my friend, "she has utterly failed to detect my case. She has mentioned much of which I am unconscious—but that of which I do complain and have complained for several months, she has not alluded to."

"Failed to detect your case! Sir, that's impossible; she has told you your case, and if you will let her prescribe for you, she would soon cure you." "No, I thank you," said my friend. The doctor then taking her by her thumbs, and putting his hands to the back of her head and nose and forehead, she soon opened her eyes and rose up. Immediately on rising, she asked what they were to have for dinner, and requested money for a beef-steak, which she obtained, and set off to make her purchase. The doctor reprimanded my friend for saying she had failed to detect his case, telling him no clairvoyant could fail—'twas impossible; that they were the only persons who could detect disease, and that a hundred of them would all tell the same thing. My friend replied that if they did all tell the same, they would certainly all be wrong, for she was, as she mentioned a number of things, all of which were notoriously untrue; and the thing of which he complained, she had not so much as glanced at.

The old gentleman insisted upon it, that she must be right, because the clairvoyants were the only persons who knew anything about disease—and they were all agreed. That whatever else he might have, arose from this state of things in his system—and that it was impossible for a man to be well with a body in such a state as his was.

"But," said my friend, "I am not what she represents. I eat, digest my food, my bowels are regular, have none of the pains in my body which she described, enjoy conversation and company, and am the very opposite of what she says. There is but one thing the matter with me, and that thing she has not discovered."

The old man insisted that she was right and he was wrong. I put in my testimony, saying I was his medical friend, and had never found out these symptoms put down to him, nor did I ever hear him complain of them, but that he complained of one peculiar pain in one peculiar place.

"Then," said he, "why don't you cure him"? I replied that the knowledge of evil and its cure did not always go together. He said if I had known what was the matter, I should have known the cure; for they (mesmerists) always knew the cure when they knew the disease. He

then commenced a tirade on my class—told me the clairvoyant knew I was a physician before I came in, and if she could know that, she could know anything else; that the doctors were an ignorant, impudent set of vile pretenders, who took the money out of people's pockets without rendering any service whatever; that they could neither teach nor learn—and were the most abominable pests and nuisances of society. He then demanded a dollar of my friend, which being paid, he abused us both to the door, and slammed the door after us.

My friend and I congratulated ourselves upon having had so much for a dollar—I saying I should want five for so much abuse—he saying he thought he should hardly like to give it for ten. So much for mesmerism and clairvoyance.

J. H. S.

CASE OF COMPOUND FRACTURE.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

SINCE reading the excellent address of W. J. Walker, M.D., on compound fractures, whose opinions on this subject are peculiarly entitled to a favorable reception by the profession, I have thought a case which occurred in my practice, while at Framingham, might not be altogether uninteresting to the readers of the Journal, in corroboration of his views relative to saving limbs which are badly fractured. I have no doubt many limbs, which might have been saved, have been sacrificed to the shrine of ambition by the young surgeon, who may wish the fame of being a good operator. I have noticed, in the vicinity of some surgeons who have the reputation of being good operators, there are more people who have lost a leg or an arm than in other regions. I will not say that these limbs have been unnecessarily sacrificed; but it proves one of three things, viz., that accidents occur more frequently in those regions, requiring operations of the kind; or that the patients of other surgeons have not recovered; or that limbs have been unnecessarily amputated.

In the month of February, 1843, I was called to see a son of Nathaniel S. Falkner, of Framingham, aged 6 years. A few minutes before I saw him, he was in the street, when a team was passing with a heavy waggon loaded with a cord and a half of green chestnut wood, and, as roguish boys are apt to do, he stepped up behind one of the oxen and struck him. The ox, resenting the blow, kicked the boy immediately before the wheels, both of which passed obliquely across the thighs. The road was composed of hard gravel, and a narrow rut worn down from three to four inches deep. The place of injury of the left thigh was near the middle, and that of the right below the middle, including about one third of the whole length of the thigh. In viewing the limbs sidewise, they appeared about as thick and as flat as the open hand. No pulse could be felt in any part below the place of injury in the right limb. It was cold and livid. In examining the place of injury, I found bone crushed in pieces, the integuments torn through, and the lower fragments had been driven through the pantaloons into the gravel. Some of

the marrow of the bone was found on the pantaloons. The left limb was not so severely injured. Pulsation could be detected in the foot, and the femoris was broken in two places, corresponding in distance to the width of the wheels. I had no fears but this limb would do well enough, provided there was no other injury. But what was to be done with the other limb. The boy was cold and pulse feeble, evidently in such a state that the shock of the operation of amputation would not be borne well. I therefore decided to place the left limb in as good position as possible, and accordingly dressed it with the many-tailed bandage, and suitable splints, and laid it over a double-inclined plane. I then removed all of the pieces of bone appearing to be loose, and all of the sharp points likely to prick the soft parts, and laid it in nearly a straight position, and enveloped it in cotton to keep it warm, leaving the opening through the integuments in such a position as to allow of the draining of the wound, determining that if, when the boy revived from the first shock of the accident, circulation and sensation did not return, to amputate. In about six hours the limb became warmer, feeble pulsation could be felt in the ankle, and sensation had partially returned; the leg was less livid.

As the circulation at this time seemed to indicate that the large vessels and nerves were not so injured as to prevent their proper functions being performed, and relying very much on the previous healthy condition of the boy, and the intelligence of his parents to take suitable care of him, I determined to make an effort to save the limb. There was sufficient discharge of blood from the wound for forty-eight hours to prevent much fever or much inflammation of the part injured. He was gently purged every day during the first week with sulph. mag., and his diet for the first four days, one half pint of water, and one half of a common cracker per day; and during the next four days, he was allowed the whole of a cracker per day, with as much water as he chose to take. After the first eight days he was allowed to take rye mush and milk, and other light food in abundance. On the tenth day the right limb was placed over a double-inclined plane in the same manner as the other, with the provision of an opening in the board to facilitate the draining of the wound. Abundant suppuration took place, the wound filled up rapidly by granulations, and not a single unfavorable symptom occurred during the whole course of treatment, and in twelve weeks from the day of the accident the boy walked to school, a distance of thirty rods, with as good and handsome pair of limbs as any other boy possesses, with the exception of the right limb being about half an inch shorter than the left. I make no comments on the case, merely stating the facts, and shall let others judge as they may as to the correctness of the practice.

Charlestown, Jan. 13, 1847.

OTIS HOYT, M.D.

EPIDEMIC ICTERUS.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

Sir,—In your Journal of January 13, I saw a notice, by Dr. Brown, of Wilmington, Ms., of an epidemic which is prevailing on the Merrimac

river. In answer to his inquiry, and for the information of others, I would say that the same disease is now prevailing here, and has been since July or August last. The symptoms are similar to those enumerated by him, as chills, re-action, headache, nausea, scanty and very high-colored urine, strong icteric hue of the whole surface and conjunctivæ, and, in some cases, pain and tenderness in the gastric and hepatic regions. The biliary organs seem to be the seat of the disease, and an epidemic influence its cause. We have had an unusual amount of dry weather during the latter part of summer and fall, followed or attended by this epidemic. In what relation they stand to each other, I will not conjecture. One thing, however, is certain, it is not endemical to the Merrimac region. It has visited, so far as I have learned, every part of this State, the sea coast as well as the interior; and its popular name, "*yaller complaint*," is as familiar to all, as the "*Tyler gripe*" was in 1842. I said it seems to be epidemic, but the cause of this epidemic does not so easily appear. It is another of those secret agents which "walk in darkness," and is, therefore, not to be reached by mortal ken. That it is contagious I have no reason to believe, although it often attacks the members of a family in succession. I treat it with an emetic of ipecac. when the stomach is oppressed, followed by a mercurial purgative, and afterwards laxatives, as castor or olive oil, with or without a few grains of pil. hyd. daily, and a liquid farinaceous diet. Would not the "fluid ext. of senna and taraxacum," of E. Dupuy, New York, be an eligible and useful remedy in this disease? I would join with Dr. Brown, and say, that any information in relation to the extent of this singular disease would be gladly received.

H. N. MATISON.

Centreville, R. I., Jan. 15, 1847.

ECLECTICISM.

(Commented for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

THERE is no truth in the prevalent opinion that physicians of the old school are the blind votaries of any exclusive theory, or the indiscriminate slaves of any aphorism. Those who are worthy of recognition among practitioners of rational medicine, by their education and habits, are uniformly eclectics, so far as they can be designated by a patronymic name. They are lovers of the truth in science, as well as in ethics, and wherever they find truth in theory, or corresponding utility in practice, they embrace the one and adopt the other, irrespective of the medical sect or clique who claim to have originated or revived the improvement. Hence they only have just claims to the merit of keeping pace with their profession, who thus superadd to the established literature and acknowledged resources of the art, whatever is either true or useful in any of the novelties proposed to the profession, whether at home or abroad. Such men are free from any entangling alliances to authorities, even to those of venerable and venerated names, and, wearing the livery of no party, they are wedded to no medical creed, however ancient or popular, except

so far as they have proved it to be both true and useful. Success is the only criterion by which they test the value of remedial agents of every kind, and they have the highest possible motives for availing themselves of everything new, which can subserve this end, and pass this ordeal.

It is thus that homœopathia has been weighed in the balances and found wanting by so many enlightened, and honest men in both the old and new worlds. Nor has the formal rejection of Hahnemannism, by our medical schools, been the result of *a priori* reasoning, assuming rational medicine to be the standard, and hence condemning it *ex cathedra* because of preconceived prejudices. But the new theory has been subjected to logical ratiocination, and shown to be baseless, by overthrowing the "false facts" whence it is derived, and demonstrating that they existed only in the fanciful imagination of the seer. And, next, the practice itself has been diligently and faithfully subjected to repeated trials, upon the sick and upon the healthy, and by this *experimentum crucis* the utter inefficiency and inertness of all its potenzen to produce any appreciable effect upon any one of the living tissues of the human body, has been placed beyond the shadow of a doubt. Such having been the decision of eminent men, in Europe and America, after full investigation, the profession, as such, cannot countenance the theory thus ascertained to be false, nor connive at the practice shown to be worthless, by unmathematical demonstration, without sacrificing all that is true and useful, at the shrine of a doctrine which has no pretensions either to truth or utility.

If the public at large could be made to understand the true issue between the profession and those who profess to practise homœopathia, they would honor the motives of those who withhold all fellowship or recognition from the new sect, and refuse consultation with any of them. Nay, more, they would be assured that whatever in this or any other new system is either true or useful, will be forthwith embraced by the eclectics, whose interests will prompt them, if the obligations of truth and honor be supposed to be absent, to adopt any new theory or practice, which promises success, this being the sure passport to enduring popularity, and ample recompense. But duty and conscience will constrain such men as value their own reputation, and prize the treasure of self-respect, to withstand the evanescent éclat with which any novel doctrine is greeted by the multitude, when they have the sagacity to perceive that the reign of popular delusion must be short-lived, as soon as the topic of their temporary acclamations is found to be neither true nor useful. Such men can afford to stand upon their dignity, and bide their time, upon the conceded principle that "every dog has his day," and that every man in our profession will find his level, nor have they any misgivings as to the result.

Already the "coming events cast their shadows before," as may be seen in the waning confidence of the public in the new system, by the uniform abandonment of homœopathia so soon as real or apparent danger to life is indicated in disease. In such instances, physicians are summoned in lieu of the homœopaths, whose craft participates in the danger of

the patient, until the moment of alarm is the signal that "Othello's occupation's gone"! Indeed, it has grown into an axiom with men of sense, whose families have been enamored with the sugar pellets, "when there is nothing the matter we have a homœopathic doctor; but when any one is sick, we send for a physician"! But the sect seldom betray any offended dignity at this left-handed compliment, so long as they can be retained and pocket their fees in the humbler capacity, giving place to physicians when danger appears. Though, to escape this humiliation, there are many who will so far yield to the stress of circumstances as to change the practice to what they call allopathic remedies, rather than lose their hold upon their families, whatever becomes of the patient. Indeed, not a few of the sect cater to the prejudices of their patients, by professing to adopt either system, and treat diseases according to order, either by the lancet, antimony and mercury; or, if desired, by medicated pellets of sugar of milk! The claims to honor or honesty on the part of such, cannot fail to be at a discount among all who think.

Eclectic physicians have been disappointed in not finding in homœopathia a single new idea, either pathological or therapeutical, of which they can make any practical use. And yet there are some hints in the writings of Hahnemann, and others of his school, which may be improved, though merely negatively; and of these few grains of wheat in the bushel of chaff, it may be worth while to speak, in proof that there is no system of either medicine or religion so bad, but that something good may be got out of it.

In the first place, we may learn that greater attention to diet, regimen, temperature, &c., is called for in modern practice, than is usually paid to these items; which indeed may be an auxiliary to medication, and often a substitute for it. Secondly, we are taught that in chronic and even sub-acute diseases, when the vital organs are unimpaired, there is a hazard of yielding to the patient's desire for taking medicine beyond either necessity or propriety. Thirdly, we should be more studious to prepare our drugs in less nauseating and forbidding forms, so as to render taking medicine less offensive to the stomachs of our patients, thus avoiding the carelessness on this point which has become a fault. These negative hints are all that can be derived from homœopathia, which can be rendered available, and none of these are new, for they are such as ancient physicians speak of in all their works. In fact, Dr. Hahnemann and his system is only a revival of the old doctrine of the *vis medicatrix nature*, improved by the super-addition of ingenious devices to amuse and mystify the patient, by seeming to do something and yet do nothing, thus "throwing out a tub to amuse the whale."

The case is very different with the system of Dr. Priessnitz and his followers of the hydropathic school. For though theirs is but the revival of the ancient system of treating all diseases by substituting water for drugs, yet there is much in the results of their theorizing and practice which commends itself as both true and useful. The name they have given to their system is an improvement upon the old nomenclature of hydriatria, hydrosudopathy, and hydrosudotherapeia, for these were the

ancient designations of the sect. Moreover, they employ water in adaptation to the pathological state, and demand in their practitioners a thorough professional training, as a prerequisite to the necessary discriminations of the morbid states of the system, for which the water cure is appropriate. For though the modern reviver of the practice is himself without such qualification, yet he claims to have acquired his tact at discrimination, and skill in employing water, in the school of experience, and has not been slow to avail himself of all the scientific knowledge within his reach. Unlike Hahnemann in this respect ; for the latter, it is well known, rejects "all the learned lumber of the schools," a lumber, by the way, of which many of his disciples are happily exempt.

The value of cold and warm bathing, general and local, is less highly estimated in general practice, in modern times, than it was in the olden school of physicians, and for a series of years there has been a tendency to overlook the functions of the skin, which is to be regretted as a departure from the teachings of rational medicine. In these respects, eclectic physicians have learned a useful lesson from the hydropathic revival, and, availing themselves of the hint, an improvement among them has been manifest. So also the cold regimen, and cold affusion, in the treatment of exanthematous fevers and diseases characterized by high temperature of the surface, though as old as Sydenham, and recognized as introducing an epoch in rational medicine, have not until lately been employed to the extent of which these remedies are capable of being useful. Physicians of the eclectic school have therefore, in some instances, countenanced the hydropathic practice as auxiliary to other remedial means, and adopted in many cases a modification of the water cure as in harmony with rational medicine. While the importance of active exercise in the open air, on the part of invalids, enforced by Priessnitz as an indispensable part of hydropathy ; and the advantage of coarse fare and hard beds, as an adjuvant to the tonic effects of the cold douche or shower-bath, are so obviously calculated to be useful, they have learned to appreciate these means by the example. The public, therefore, may not have suffered by the introduction of hydropathy among us, except so far as any have been led to rely upon it, to the exclusion of other agencies. For it is this exclusiveness and indiscriminate employment of any one class of remedies, and a reliance upon these alone, which is to be deprecated, for the reason that there are morbid conditions of the human body in which either the external application of cold or hot water must be dangerous to life ; and the same is true of every other potent remedy used in any school of medicine, since they may all be contra-indicated by existing pathological states. To discriminate these, is the province of rational medicine ; else, "what is one man's meat, may become another man's poison," and remedies which are successful in one patient, may be fatal in another having the same disease, without there being any apparent obvious dissimilarity. He, then, who presumes to prescribe any class of remedies for disease, without reference to the pathological state, or without being qualified to detect local lesions, which may contra-indicate his remedies, is not a physician, to whatever old or new school he may claim

allegiance. Recovery from danger under such management, if it occur, is an extraordinary escape, not a cure; and the most that can be predicated of such an example, is that the patient got well in spite of the doctor. Examples of such recoveries might easily be furnished. R.

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, JANUARY 27, 1847.

Births, Marriages and Deaths in Massachusetts.—The Secretary of this Commonwealth makes a report annually to the Legislature, of all the births, marriages and deaths, which have been returned to him from the city and town clerks, and such other officials as are authorized to make these returns. No one believes the document to be just what it should be, in point of completeness, but it is gradually, from year to year, approximating that degree of accuracy which the law contemplates. To show that the returns are imperfect in one respect, the fact only needs to be stated, that, according to this document, there were but twenty-nine marriages in Boston in 1846. In many cases this class of statistics cannot be collected, in consequence of the utter indifference of the inhabitants to the subject. The following are specimens of the interest taken in registration. From Chelsea, a thickly-settled place, two miles north of Boston, the proper officer sent a note of this kind—"I presume many deaths have taken place in this town, of which, as yet, I have no record." Chelmsford—"Probably the whole number (deaths) would not vary far from thirty. One of the sextons made no returns." Gardner—"The births were not all returned this year." Lancaster—"No returns of births received from the school committee."

We can only express a hope that this matter will finally receive that attention which its importance merits, both from the people of Massachusetts at large, and those whose duty it is to collect the information and transmit it to our indefatigable Secretary of State.

Excision of the Submaxillary Gland.—At the Laporte Medical School, Indiana, on the 16th of December, Dr. Shipman operated upon a young man of 20 years, who had a scirrhus enlargement of the submaxillary gland, which had been of about three years standing. There had been a gradual enlargement of the organ, attended by no pain or inflammation, but accompanied by several smaller tumors in the neighborhood.

"An incision was made about two inches long over the tumor, and it was carefully dissected out from the sheaths of the large vessels of the neck. This part of the operation was very delicate, the knife being carried close to the carotid artery and internal jugular vein; and when the tumor was removed (which occupied only about three minutes), the artery and vein were laid bare for the space of two inches, and the artery was seen plainly, palpitating at the bottom of the wound. The patient did not lose a spoonful of blood—only one artery being tied (the facial)."

La Lancette Canadienne.—A new bi-monthly sheet has appeared at Montreal, under the editorial care of J. Leprohon, M.D., exclusively devoted to the interests of medicine and surgery and published wholly in the French language. The specimen No. is well made up—of the contents of which the following is a summary, viz., "Accouchemens : Dangers et Difficultés de la Version, Provenant de la Contraction brusque de l'Utérus sur le col de l'Enfant. Accouchemens avant Terme et Fausses Couches. Hémiplegia Faciale Spontané chez un Nouveau-né. Présentation de la Face. Prospectus. De l'esprit d'observation. Correspondence Médicale. De l'opération du bec-de-lièvre et de son opportunité. Académie des Sciences. Revue Générale." "L'abonnement est de quatre piastres par année, payable par semestre et invariablement d'avance."

The novelty of having a respectable Journal in the French language will undoubtedly have a strong influence in gathering a large subscription in Lower Canada, where only a few, comparatively, of the practitioners of medicine, speak English. From the character of the enterprise, sustaining, as it will, whatever is sound in science, and spreading abroad at the same time the local matters of professional life in the provinces, it would be a reproach to the intelligence of that respectable body for whom it is especially designed, if it should fail of being generously sustained. Medical gentlemen in the States, who are ambitious of keeping alive their knowledge of a language which Napoleon once intended should become universal, will find *La Lancette* an agreeable and instructive periodical.

American Missionary Physicians.—In the last Missionary Herald, there appear the names of eleven medical practitioners, who have devoted themselves to the arduous labors and responsibilities of the missionary service : viz., Newton Adams, M.D., stationed at Umlazi, Southern Africa ; Azariah Smith, M.D., at Erzeroom, Western Asia ; Henry A. DeForest, M.D., at Beirut, and C. V. A. Van Dyck, M.D., at 'Abeik, Syria ; Austin H. Wright, M.D., at Oroomiah, Persia ; John Scudder, M.D., at Madras, Southern Africa ; Dan P. Bradley, M.D., at Bangkok, Siam ; Dyer Hall, M.D., and Peter Parker, M.D., at Canton, China ; Seth L. Andrews, M.D., at Kailua, Dwight Baldwin, M.D., at Lahaina, and John W. Smith, M.D., at Koloa, Sandwich Islands. Among the Oregon Indians, Dr. Marcus Whitman is stationed. Among the Cherokees, Dr. Elizur Butler, and amongst the Sioux, at the Indian town of Kapoja, Dr. Thomas S. Williamson.

These are self-sacrificing men, who have left the society in which they moved at home, where civil and religious liberty is fully realized and enjoyed, to reside with savages or the demi-civilized. For the purpose of administering to the physical and moral diseases of the poor and ignorant, the oppressed, and the sufferers by false systems of religious belief and bad human government, these devoted men have left all the endearments of friends and country. May they enjoy the satisfaction of finding that they can heal the sick, and that they can teach, by their precept and example, both civilization and the true way of worshipping the author of our existence.

History of Chemistry.—Prof. Draper's introductory to his present course of lectures in the University of New York, on the history of a

science of which he is a distinguished and devoted expounder, is in admirable keeping with all his previous efforts. Industry is the power by which the highest eminence is attained in any department of life—and industry is one of the characteristics of Dr. D.'s mind. The world has a right to expect great things from him in future. The true way of giving interest to a really important subject, is to show the people that their comfort and happiness will be promoted in exact proportion to the care they bestow upon it. Chemistry must be made a plain matter for unsophisticated men, and Professor Draper must not forget the opportunity that presents itself to him of assisting greatly to do this, and he will thus raise a monument to his own fame.

Diseases of the Neck of the Uterus.—This is a compact duodecimo of 146 pages, containing a large mass of information in a small space. Nothing superfluous has been allowed to have place; hence those who consult the treatise may be sure that nothing is introduced unnecessarily to swell it into the size of a respectable library book. The title runs thus, viz., "A practical treatise on inflammation, ulceration and induration of the neck of the uterus, with remarks on the value of leucorrhœa and prolapsus uteri as symptoms of uterine disease. By James Henry Bennet, M.D." The author enjoyed rare opportunities of making himself familiar with this department of professional knowledge, which is apparent in every topic presented to the reader. The trade in pessaries would be spoiled altogether, should his opinions be universally adopted, which would make the Alexanders—the coppersmiths—cry out for the rights of the ancient craft. However, the proverb says that one swallow does not make summer, and we shall not go to war with them on the testimony of one witness. This, too, may be had at Mr. Mussey's, Cornhill.

Smith's Minor Surgery.—Messrs. Barrington & Haswell, of Philadelphia, have quite recently brought out a second edition of the popular production by Henry H. Smith, M.D., of that city, called "Minor Surgery, or Hints on the every-day Duties of the Surgeon, having numerous additions—the whole being illustrated by two hundred and twenty-seven engravings." Compared with the first issue, this is evidently far superior in a variety of respects. No operator, however eminent, need hesitate to consult this unpretending yet excellent book. Those who are young in the business would find Dr. Smith's treatise a necessary companion, after once understanding its true character. Minor surgery, humble as it may seem, is, after all, the major part of every surgeon's practice. All the general practitioners of the United States are engaged in a constant routine of slight operations—in common estimation, perhaps, trifling. This being the case, the work under consideration is an every-day book, which we may all consult with advantage. Not one in the hundred of those who buy the great works on surgery, ever amputates a limb or cuts for the stone. The plates show the position of the hands in adjusting parts; the position of apparatus; the arrangement of bandages; and, in a word, it is an admirable digest of surgery, which should be on every physician's table.

Insensibility by Inhalation of the Letheon.—A case is reported in the New York Medical and Surgical Reporter of Jan. 9th, by Dr. C. T. Collins, formerly editor of that periodical, in which the operation for the removal of a scirrhus mamma was performed by him while the patient was under the influence of the letheon. The operation lasted from six to ten minutes, during which the patient "was entirely unconscious of what was going on," and no unpleasant symptoms ensued. Dr. Collins adds some remarks respecting the propriety of using this new auxiliary in surgery, on account of its being patented. We give his own words on this point in the following quotation, which is all we have room for.

"Now if this is quackery, as intimated by two medical men who seem to me rather more nice than wise, then I am bold to say that I shall use the same means if again placed in the same circumstances."

"I have seen some articles written against the use of this new discovery, as it is called, on the ground of its savoring of quackery; but I am persuaded that such writers do not fully understand the feelings of those who have used it. They would say to Drs. Mott, Warren, Cox, Hayward, Bigelow, Post, Rogers, Peirson, and numerous others, let your patients, who fondly look to you for relief under the most trying circumstances, die rather than use anything which you do not fully comprehend! I believe that it would puzzle even these severe critics themselves to tell what compounds some of their own prescriptions make, or their *modus operandi*. Because one man chooses to make a little speculation in the use of sulphuric ether, or his peculiar manner of administering it, are all others who resort to it from higher motives to be called supporters of quackery? Or where is the physician who knows all the different effects upon the animal economy in a normal and abnormal condition, of half the remedies that are to be found placed in the *Materia Medica* as legitimate agents? Such persons, I think, are few. I am not arguing in favor of secret remedies, or patent rights, for I detest them in medicine as much as any one."

The New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal, edited by Drs. Carpenter, Fenner, Harrison and Hester, disposes of the matter by quoting the article from the Philadelphia Medical Examiner, which was copied into our Journal of Dec. 16th, to which the New Orleans Editors give the following brief but emphatic introduction.

"We fully concur in the remarks of the editor of the Medical Examiner respecting this *new discovery*. We have read Dr. Bigelow's paper in the Dec. No. of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, but shall give no extracts, as the *gist* of the matter is contained in the following analysis of it by Dr. Huston. That the leading surgeons of Boston could be captivated by *such an invention as this*, heralded to the world under the auspices of a *patent right*, and upon *such evidences* of utility and safety as are presented by Dr. Bigelow, excites our amazement. Why, mesmerism, which is repudiated by the *savans* of Boston, has done a thousand times greater wonders, and without any of the dangers here threatened. What shall we hear next?"

Mobile Marine Hospital.—P. H. Lewis, M.D., Surgeon of the institution, has made out a report of the medical doings in the Hospital, for 1846. The following synopsis shows that it is a laborious office which he

holds. Discharged during the year, 366; died, 16; remaining under treatment, 22; admitted, 404. Deaths, four per cent. There is included in this catalogue of patients, 84 cases of intermittent fever; 33 of remittent; 41 injuries; 39 of syphilis; 12 of pneumonia, and a great variety of maladies which must have made great demands upon Dr. Lewis's time. From a personal knowledge of several marine hospitals, we are certain that they are well managed and scientifically officered, and we have no doubt that the one at Mobile is equal in this respect to any of them.

Massachusetts Medical College.—The medical class in attendance the present season in Boston, numbers 165, several having entered since our last No., and one since the printing of the catalogue.

Tincture of Muriate of Iron in Gonorrhœa.—Dr. Osborne, of Erie, Alabama, informs us that he has continued to use the tincture of the muriate of iron beneficially in leucorrhœa, and that he has extended its application to some cases of gleet, and one of gonorrhœa, with success. The latter disease yielded to it almost immediately, as it is said to do to the nitrate of silver, the mode of applying which has already been made known to the profession. Dr. Osborne uses the tincture of iron according to the following formula:—R. Tinct. mur. iron, gtt. x.; cold water, 3ss. Mix and inject with a syringe. In gonorrhœa he prescribes fifteen drops of the tincture to the half ounce of water, to be employed as an injection three times daily.—*Western Med. Journal.*

Medical Miscellany.—Dr. J. W. C. Evans has been elected Speaker of the House of Representatives in New Jersey.—Dr. Robert W. Woodworth has been appointed a surgeon in the Navy, and Drs. Randolph Mason and Joshua Huntington assistant surgeons.—Army surgeons receive \$149 per month, and assistant surgeons \$125.—Dr. Owen is elected a State delegate from Anne Arundel Co. Maryland.—Smallpox exists at Providence, R. I.—A plan is before Congress for increasing the number of assistant surgeons in the Army.—On the catalogue of students now in attendance at the Louisville, Ky., Medical Institute, are three hundred and forty-eight names. One hundred and eight belong to Kentucky. Fifteen States are represented in that excellent School of Medicine and Surgery.

ERRATUM.—Page 514, line 11 from top, for "*vivere lupto*" read *vivere repto*.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—The papers of Drs. Brooks and Dixon have been received. Two from New York are inadmissible.

MARRIED.—Dr. I. S. Curtis, of Merrimac, Mass., to Miss L. Branscomb.—Dr. J. A. G. Comstock, of New Lebanon, Conn., to Miss S. Richmond.

DIED.—At Millbury, Mass., Dr. Wm. M. Benedict, 50.

Report of Deaths in Boston—for the week ending Jan. 23d. 45.—Males, 23—females, 22. Stillborn, 6. Of consumption, 11—lung fever, 6—typhus fever, 2—intermittent fever, 1—hooping cough, 2—gravel, 1—infantile, 6—dropsy on the brain, 4—disease of the heart, 1—dropsy, 1—intemperance, 3—pleurisy, 1—paralysis, 1—croup, 2—debility, 1—convulsions, 1—influenza, 1.

Under 5 years, 20—between 5 and 20 years, 3—between 20 and 40 years, 8—between 40 and 60 years, 9—over 60 years, 5.

Encyclopædia Americana.—Messrs. Lea & Blanchard have brought out a supplementary volume of this favorite work, making the fourteenth in the series, under the accurate editorial supervision of Henry Vethake, LL.D. It is printed to match those which have preceded it, in double columns, with paper and type to correspond. For ourselves, we are much obliged to the enterprising Philadelphia publishers for bringing out this useful collection of facts in history, biography, geography, science and the arts, besides something of everything else in the world of knowledge. It is an exceedingly convenient book for consultation, equally important to all classes of society, and we are quite sure that the public would be gratified with an annual continuation, if filled as acceptably as this, with modern matter, properly compounded with antiquarian researches, and such strongly marked events and discoveries as distinguish the age. Medical gentlemen owning the thirteen volumes published under the superintendence of Dr. Leiber, hereafter cannot consider them a perfect set without the new fourteenth. A distinguishing feature of this extra, is the account given of the origin and present position of the most celebrated chemists, naturalists, physicians, &c., now living in Europe. Mr. Mussey, Cornhill, Boston, furnishes copies reasonably.

South-western Medical Reformer.—Were it not for keeping the medical public apprised of what is transpiring, we should not feel obliged to notice every meteoric shower of anti-scientific influence that falls upon our table in the shape of a periodical. This South-western Medical Reformer, like a score of the same calibre, now radiating their feeble light, a-la-tal-low-candle, beneath the full blaze of the meridian sun, hails from Memphis, Tenn., bearing this motto, viz., "Revolution is the only effective remedy for social evils." Should the citizens of Memphis be at all influenced by the sentiment, they would, regarding the Reformer as a nuisance, take measures to remove it at once. This is verily an age of mushroomism in medical literature.

Charity Hospital in New Orleans—Erection of an Amphitheatre.—We are gratified to learn, that the administrators of this institution have at last determined to erect an amphitheatre for the performance of surgical operations. Such a thing has been long wanted. Heretofore operations were performed in the wards, to the great terror of the surrounding sick, with much inconvenience to the operating surgeon, and where it was impossible for a large number of spectators to witness what was done. A good amphitheatre is indispensably necessary to a large hospital, and we are glad to hear that one is proposed to be erected as soon as possible. The number admitted into this hospital during the year, will approximate 7000; notwithstanding its general healthiness. The sick and disabled soldiers returning from the seat of war—persons belonging to other States—have contributed in no small degree to the formation of this unusual number. In consideration of this, it would be right for the General Government to make an appropriation in aid of this liberal institution, whose doors are open to the afflicted of every State and Nation. Other cities think they have done enough, when they have provided for their own sick, but the portals of the New Orleans Charity Hospital are open to all, come from where they may.—*New Orleans Medical Journal.*

